



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

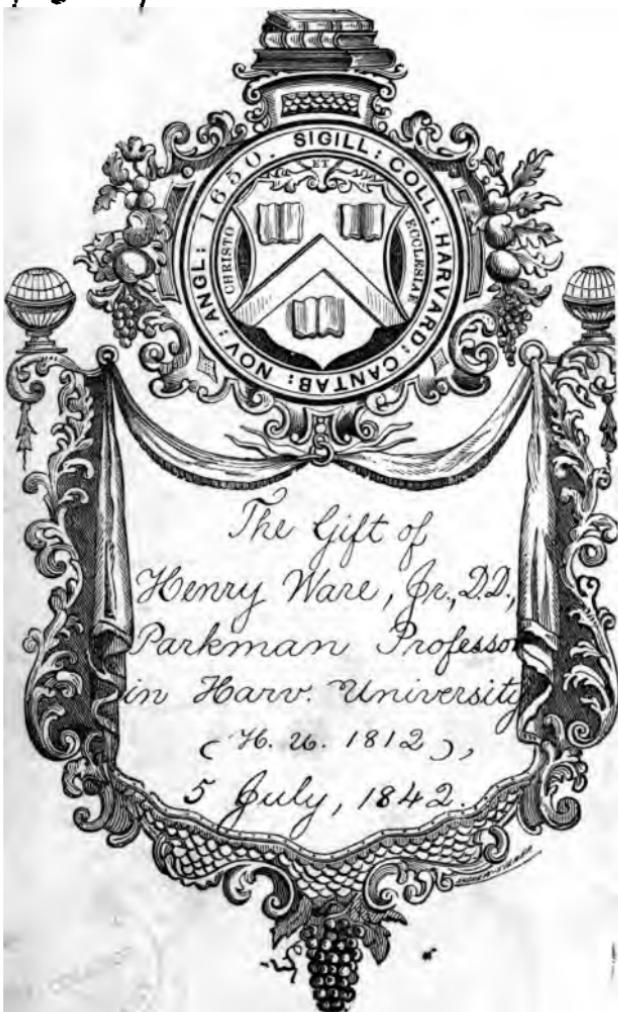
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

U.S.  
13187  
25.9

13187.25.9

7d. 18











© AN ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
CONFLAGRATION  
OF  
THE URSULINE CONVENT.



AT THE REQUEST OF SEVERAL GENTLEMEN, THE AUTHOR  
WAS INDUCED TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT  
OF FACTS, IN RELATION TO THE URSULINE CON-  
VENT, WHICH WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE, ON  
THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 11th, 1834.

---

BY A FRIEND OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

---

[COPY-RIGHT SECURED.]

BOSTON:  
PRINTED FOR THE PUBLISHER.  
1834.

U.S. 13187.25.9

Rev. 2/18, 57, 1044

The gift of the Home for the  
Dissemination of the Home

## PREFATORY REMARKS.

---

THE occurrence, of which it is our intention to give a correct statement, transcends in many respects in enormity, any transaction to be found on the records of mankind. In making this assertion, we have taken into consideration, the general advance of the human race in knowledge, and we did hope also in virtue, and that this is particularly true of the favored inhabitants of Massachusetts, than whom we do believe there is no other collection of people on the globe, where information is so generally diffused, or deportment more morally correct. How could it happen, that in the midst of such a people, such an outrage against humanity should be perpetrated? It is impossible that the ostensible causes which led to it could be the true ones. The unfounded and scandalous rumors against the members of the Ursuline community have all vanished before the torch of truth. The fact is, there is one passion, and one passion alone, that could lead to such results, and that is fanaticism. It is not to be concealed or denied, that for some years past, there has been an endeavor to get up an excitement against the Catholic Religion, as one of the greatest curses to which our country is exposed. The Constitution of the United States recognizes no religion, but extends protection to all. It is too late now to inquire as to the expediency of tolerating the Catholic Religion in a protestant country, if the United States, as a nation, may be called such. It is here, and it is here by constitutional right, entitled to protection, and must be protected. We are no Catholics, nor are we bigots of any other sect. We do not believe that it is the tendency of the catholic, or any other christian sect, to make men bad, but on the contrary, to make them good, and fit them for heaven. Our remark hardly needs illustration as it respects the Catholics in Boston, while they are blest with such spiritual guides as a CHEVERUS, a MATIGNON, and a FENWICK. We know that man, in every situation and under all circumstances, is the same animal, and, unfortunately, that the majority everywhere are bad. It is not our intention, if it were within our ability, to go into a defence of the catholic system of religion, but we do know enough of it, to assert positively, that it is not what its enemies represent it to be, and that the Catholics, as a body, are as patriotic and loyal citizens as their brethren of any other denomination. The power of the Pope, as supreme head of the Catholic Church, to those who have taken pains to understand by

investigating the subject, when viewed in a temporal light, cannot interfere with the government of any country, in which that religion may be established.

We have only one further observation to make before closing these prefatory remarks, and that is upon the false notions and prejudices that prevail in our community about the conventual life. The language we have heard used, when speaking of the establishment at Charlestown, it would not become us to express with our pen; and upon what authority has this been said? Not upon the slightest tittle of evidence against the institution itself; but because similar communities, in other countries, have been perverted, as it is said, from the abodes of holiness and purity, into sinks of the lowest debauchery; and let us ask, what building that ever canopied the head of man, or what institution composed of men, that has not been disgraced by the crimes of man? If convents are legal institutions, they have a right to exist, and are entitled to the protection of the law. The Legislature may have the right to guard against abuses as they may think most expedient; but neither the whole community, nor any part of it, have the right to exterminate them, with fire and sword. We do most ardently wish, that those who shall be proved guilty of this great outrage against the law, may be held to answer strictly to the law. It must be apparent to every reader of this pamphlet, whatever they may think of the cause assigned by us, that the causes, which can be found in the following pages, cannot be the true ones which led to the burning of the Convent.

---

CONFLAGRATION  
OF THE  
CONVENT AT CHARLESTOWN.

---

**MYSTERIOUS.**—We understand that a great excitement at present exists in Charlestown, in consequence of the mysterious disappearance of a young lady at the Nunnery in that place. The circumstances, as far as we can learn, are as follows:—

The young lady was sent to the place in question to complete her education, and became so pleased with the place and its inmates, that she was induced to seclude herself from the world and take the black veil. After some time spent in the Nunnery, she became dissatisfied, and made her escape from the institution—but was afterwards persuaded to return, being told that if she would continue but three weeks longer, she would be dismissed with honor. At the end of that time, a few days since, her friends called for her, but she was not to be found, and much alarm is excited in consequence.—*Mercantile Journal, August 8.*

We heard yesterday of the excitement mentioned in the subjoined article from the Mercantile Journal, but discrediting the story which excited it, we did not give publicity to the rumor, and we are now authorized by Bishop Fenwick to assert, that the whole story upon which the excitement was founded is untrue. He will probably, on Monday, lay all the facts in the case before the public. In the mean time, it may not be amiss to say, briefly, that the excitement has been immediately occasioned by the language of a Sister of the Convent, who is an invalid, and has been sometime deprived of reason by brain fever.

*Transcript, August 9.*

**THE NUNNERY.**—Considerable excitement still exists in relation to the disappearance of the Nun, at Mount Benedict, notwithstanding what we stated on the authority of Bishop Fenwick, on Saturday. We expected to be able to-day to have laid the facts in the case before the public, on the authority of the Bishop, but we learn that he, understanding that a gentleman of Charlestown, residing near the Convent, and who is not a Roman Catholic, having interested himself in the matter, and being satisfied that none of the rumors which occasioned the excitement were true, proposed to make a public statement, has preferred to let the facts be given to the public by one who could not be accused of partiality, and has accordingly waited that gentleman's statement.

*Ibid. Aug. 11.*

DREADFUL CONFLAGRATION!

[*Office of the Morning Post, August 12, 11 o'clock, A. M.*]

**FIRE—OUTRAGE.**—It is well known, that for some days past, a groundless rumor has prevailed, in Charlestown and its vicinity, that a young lady, by the name of MARY HARRISON, or MARY ST. JOHN HARRISON, placed in the Catholic Convent, as a candidate for the veil,

has been secreted or abducted, through the machinations of the controlling agents of the establishment, and was not to be found by her friends. In consequence of this rumor, a great excitement was created in Charlestown, and open threats of burning down the Convent were uttered, but scarcely credited, till about 10 o'clock, last night, when a large mob gathered round the Institution, and communicated to the inmates their design to carry their threats into execution, and gave them a certain time to retire. At this moment, the Convent contained twelve Nuns, and  *fifty-seven female scholars*, some of whom were of a very tender age. One of the latter informed us, that at the first annunciation, all, or nearly all, the Nuns swooned, and were not aroused to a sense of their dangerous situation, until the heralds of destruction returned and reiterated their mission, with threats of burning the Nuns with the building.

The unfortunate ladies then retired to the garden, carrying with them such articles of value as were within reach. In order to accelerate their flight, tar barrels were brought near to the walls, and ignited, and as soon as the building was deserted, the assailants entered, with flaming torches, and, after flying through the apartments, which were fitfully illuminated by the transient, but glaring blaze of the torches, they were simultaneously applied at twenty distinct points, among the curtains and drapery of the rooms, and instantly the interior of the Institution was enveloped in one general conflagration. The astounded refugees at first gathered round the tomb, at the bottom of the garden, but were soon driven from this sanctuary, by the ruthless avengers of an imaginary wrong, and were compelled to fly to the adjoining fields and neighboring houses for safety. A large number found a retreat in the house of Mr. Joseph Adams, at Winter Hill. The mob burst open the tomb, and ransacked the coffins, but retired without offering any other outrage to the ashes of the dead. The fire was first applied about 11 o'clock, and the Boston engines, responsive to the tocsin of alarm, immediately repaired to the spot, but were prevented from acting against the fire, by the surrounding multitude, which, we are informed, were not less than *four thousand* in number. We understand, that Mr. Runey attempted to read the riot act, but without effect; and the mobocrats did not cease from their exertions till the main building, together with the chapel, out-houses, and even the gardener's dwelling, were entirely destroyed. The few articles that the Nuns and scholars succeeded in conveying to the garden, were seized upon by the destroyers, and thrown back into the flames, and nothing was rescued from ruin except what was actually attached to their persons. When the nefarious undertaking was thoroughly accomplished, fragments of fire and combustibles were collected, and a bonfire built up, as a signal of triumph. A majority of the scholars were Protestants, some of whom have no relations in this vicinity, and their distressing situation, being stripped of everything, is indescribably lamentable.

The theatre of the outrage, this morning, presented a melancholy scene—parents anxiously, but without avail, inquiring for their daughters, and brothers for their sisters, were to be met with on every hand. Thousands of spectators thronged the hill—some staring, more sorrowing, and a miserable few rejoicing, at the evidences of unparalleled desolation.

The following letter, which was published in the *Post* this morning, shows that the mob were actuated by erroneous impressions:—

MR. EDITOR,—Some excitement having been created in this vicinity, by misrepresentations that have come before the public, in relation to

the disappearance of a young lady from the Nunnery in this place, I deem it proper for me to state certain facts that are in my possession respecting the affair.

On the afternoon of Monday, the 28th ult., the lady in question came to my house, appeared to be considerably agitated, and expressed her wish to be conveyed to the residence of an acquaintance in West Cambridge. I lent her my assistance; and, on the succeeding day, I called with the purpose of inquiring for the causes which induced her to leave the Institution. I was informed that she had returned to the Nunnery, in company with the Bishop, with a promise that she should be permitted to leave in two or three weeks, if it was her wish. Since that time, various rumors have been in circulation, calculated to excite the public mind, and to such an extent as induced me to attempt to ascertain their foundation; accordingly, on Saturday, the 9th instant, I called at the Nunnery, and requested of the Superior, an interview with the lady referred to. I obtained it; and was informed by her, that she was at liberty to leave the Institution at any time she chose. The same statement was also made by the Superior, who farther remarked, that, in the present state of public feeling, she should prefer to have her leave.

As it has been currently reported that the lady was not to be found, to allay the excitement in consequence of it, I have thought the above statement due to the public

EDWARD CUTTER.

Charlestown, August 11, 1834.

[From the *Daily Advertiser* of Wednesday, August 13.]

TO THE PUBLIC.

Whereas erroneous statements have appeared in the public papers, intimating that the liberty of a young lady was improperly and unlawfully restrained at the Convent in this town, and believing that said publications were intended to excite the public mind against that Institution, and might result in unpleasant or serious consequences, the Selectmen, considering it their duty to endeavor to allay any such excitement, have, at the request of the Government of the Institution, fully examined into the circumstances of the case, and were conducted by the lady in question throughout the premises, and into every apartment of the place—the whole of which is in good order, and nothing appearing to them to be in the least objectionable; and they have the satisfaction to assure the public, that there exists no cause of complaint on the part of said female, as she expresses herself to be entirely satisfied with her present situation, it being that of her own choice, and that she has no desire or wish to alter it.

THOMAS HOOPER,  
ABIJAH MONROE,  
SAMUEL POOR,  
STEVEN WILEY,  
JOHN RUNEY, }  
Selectmen.

Charlestown, August 11, 1834.

As soon as the transactions which we have above described, were known in this city, yesterday morning, they produced, as might have been expected, a universal sentiment of regret and mortification, at the outrage thus committed at midnight upon a family of defenceless females, and at the indelible stain thus inflicted on the character of our community. The Mayor promptly issued a notice, inviting the citizens to assemble at Faneuil Hall, at 1 o'clock, to take such measures as the occasion might require. A very large number of citizens assembled at the appointed hour, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, and the measures

recited in the annexed official account were adopted with great unanimity, and with ample demonstrations of cordial approbation. The remarks of Mr. Otis were listened to with great satisfaction, and elicited the repeated plaudits of the assembly.

At an overwhelming meeting of the citizens of Boston, assembled at Faneuil Hall yesterday at 1 o'clock, in pursuance of an invitation from the Mayor, Theodore Lyman, Jr. the Mayor of the city was called to the Chair, and Zebedee Cook, Jr. was appointed Secretary. After a pertinent but brief address by the Chairman, explanatory of the objects of the meeting, Resolutions were presented by Josiah Quincy, Jr. prefaced by some highly interesting and animated remarks. He was followed by Garrison Gray Otis, in his usual felicitous style, when the Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of the citizens of Boston, the late attack on the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, occupied only by defenseless females, was a base and cowardly act, for which the perpetrators deserve the contempt and detestation of the community.

*Resolved*, That the destruction of property and danger of life caused thereby, calls loudly on all good citizens to express individually and collectively the abhorrence they feel of this high-handed violation of the laws.

*Resolved*, That we, the Protestant citizens of Boston, do pledge ourselves, collectively and individually, to unite with our Catholic brethren in protecting their persons, their property, and their civil and religious rights.

*Resolved*, That the Mayor and Aldermen be requested to take all measures consistent with law, to carry the foregoing resolution into effect, and as citizens, we tender our personal services to support the laws under the direction of the city authorities.

*Resolved*, That the Mayor be requested to nominate a committee from the citizens at large, to investigate the proceedings of the last night, and to adopt every suitable mode of bringing the authors and abettors of this outrage to justice.

The following Committee was nominated by the Mayor.

H. G. Otis, John D. Williams, James T. Austin, Henry Lee, James Clark, Cyrus Alger, John Henshaw, Francis J. Oliver, Mark Healey, Charles G. Loring, C. G. Greene, Isaac Harris, Thomas H. Perkins, John Rayner, Henry Gassett, Daniel D. Brodhead, Noah Brooks, H. F. Baker, Z. Cook, Jr., George Darracott, Samuel Hubbard, Henry Far-nam, Benjamin F. Hallet, John K. Simpson, John Cotton, Benj. Rich, William Sturgis, Charles P. Curtis.

On motion of Mr. George Bond, the committee of twenty-eight were requested to consider the expediency of providing funds to repair the damage done to the Convent, &c.

On motion of John C. Park, Esq. it was

*Resolved*, That the Mayor be authorized and requested to offer a very liberal reward to any individual who, in case of further excesses, will arrest and bring to punishment a leader in such outrages.

THEODORE LYMAN, Jr. *Chairman.*

ZEDEDEE COOK, Jr. *Secretary.*

Similar resolutions were adopted at Charlestown.

We understand that on Monday the convent was opened to visitors, and was thoroughly examined from the belfrey to the cellar; that the lady superior has always been willing to make every explanation to those who came to her in a suitable manner, and treated her with the

civility due to her sex and station. From all that we can learn, the violence was utterly without cause. The institution was in its very nature unpopular, and a strong feeling existed against it; but there was nothing in the vague rumors that have been idly circulating, to authorize or account for any the least act of violence. We should state perhaps that during the violent scenes that were taking place before the convent—while the mob were breaking the windows and staying in the doors of the institution—and while the fire was blazing upon the hill as a signal to the mob—one or two muskets were discharged from the windows of the nunnery, or of some of the buildings in the vicinity.—*Atlas.*

We learn that further excesses were committed at Mount Benedict on Tuesday night by a mob of ruffians. There was no force, civil or military, to oppose their violence.

In this city nothing occurred worthy of special notice. The Civil and Military authorities were on duty all night, prepared to act in case of necessity.—*Cum. Gaz.*

We understand that the Catholics were called together on Tuesday afternoon by Bishop Fenwick, who addressed them in a most earnest and impressive manner. He assured them, that acts of violence, which terminated in the destruction of the Convent at Charlestown, were regarded with deep regret and indignation by their protestant fellow citizens of Boston: that it was their duty to leave the vindication of their rights to the guardianship of the judicial tribunals and the civil authority: and that, as citizens and Christians, it was equally incumbent on them to refrain from every thing, which might appear to be dictated by a spirit of revenge. He concluded by solemnly enjoining on all who heard him to communicate to others the counsel which he had given to them.—*D. Adv.*

On Wednesday evening, there was more agitation and alarm in the city than at any previous time; the civil and military authorities were on the alert; but the night passed without disturbance. It is scarce necessary to say, that all good men view the proceedings of the mob with abhorrence.—*Recorder.*

**PROCLAMATION,**  
*By his Excellency, JOHN DAVIS, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

Whereas, it appears from representation made to me by the several Committees of Vigilance of Charlestown and Boston, which representation, in substance, is confirmed by the Attorney General of the Commonwealth, that on the night of the 11th inst. a large number of persons assembled at Charlestown, by preconcerted designs of violence, and proceeded, in a high-handed manner, in disregard of the Civil Authorities, and in defiance of the Laws, with fire, and acts of outrage, to demolish the building called the Ursuline Convent, to lay waste the gardens and grounds, and to break open and desecrate the Sepulchres of the Dead, having previously compelled a large number of females, then dwelling in said building, many of whom were pupils in a school, and of tender age, to seek safety in flight, and to take refuge in the fields. And whereas it also appears that after much investigation, the civil magistrates and other officers of the law are unable to discover the perpetrators of this daring outrage, and that the ordinary and common course of proceedings is thus proved to be ineffectual.

Therefore, in compliance with the request of said Committee, and in pursuance of the authority vested in me by law, I do offer in behalf of the Commonwealth, a reward of five hundred dollars to such person or persons, as shall cause the said offenders, or any of them, to be apprehended and brought to conviction, which sum of five hundred dollars, shall be paid to one or more persons, as existing facts upon conviction of an offender or offenders, and the ends of Justice, may require.

And I do further call upon all good citizens of this Commonwealth to aid in healing the wound which the laws have received by the open contempt of their authority, and the wanton disregard of private rights. I appeal to them to be vigilant in preserving the public peace, and in sustaining the civil authority. This discontentsance of such proceedings will restore confidence, and make our peaceable institutions sufficiently powerful to overawe insubordination, and to meet any emergency. If the people will it, there will be no more destruction of private property, or invasion of private rights, by open acts of violence.

Given under my hand, this fifteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, and the fifty-ninth year of the Independence of the United States.

JOHN DAVIS.

By His Excellency the Governor.

EDWARD D. BANGS,  
*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*

The following is a list of the names of the pupils at the Ursuline Convent, at the time of its demolition. As many of the scholars owned much valuable property, such as Piano Fortes, Harps, Guitars, Silver Cups, &c., upon which their initials were engraved, and which were stolen at the time of the conflagration, the publication of this list may lead to the detection of the thieves. Editors of papers in this city and vicinity, will confer a favor upon the public by copying the annexed list, and the statement of property missing. Any information relative to the subject will be thankfully received by the Committee of Investigation, now sitting at the Common Council Room.

*Boston* : Penelope R. Williams, Elizabeth W. Williams, Sarah E. Williams, Melancy A. Williams, Mary Anne N. Fraser, Jane Fraser, Mary Anne Bullard, Caroline Bullard, Louisa Murdoch, Rosamond A. Moriarty, Ellen Maria Moriarty, Abba Vose Bemis, Louisa Goddard, Elizabeth S. Willis, Frances Anne Whitney, Ellen Jackson, Augusta Willis, Mary Utley, Maria Barnard, Hannah Thompson, Elizabeth McGuire, Elizabeth Page.

*South Boston* : Sarah E. Howe, Lucy Howe.

*Cambridge* : Maria D. Fay.

*Cambridgeport* : Mary S. Bent.

*Charlestown* : Penelope B. English.

*Watertown* : Lucy W. Thaxter, Mary L. Thaxter.

*Gloucester* : Ann Mason, Harriet Mason.

*Brighton* : Anna Augusta Parkman.

*Milton* : Rosalinda Russell.

*Brookline* : Marietta Whitmarsh, Caroline Whitmarsh.

*Bath, Maine* : Ann Julia Robinson.

*Quebec, Canada* : Susan Perault.

*Savannah, Georgia* : Martha Ann Lamar.

*New Orleans* : Gertrude Pend, Rebecca E. Nye, Elizabeth Jones, Mary Ann Wales.

*Porto Rico* : Malvina Storer, Rosalinda Storer, Catalina Mason.

Statement, as far as can be ascertained, of the Instruments, Plate, and other articles, lost by the Young Ladies, in consequence of the late riot and conflagration at the Ursuline Community, Mount Benedict, Charlestown.

Miss Fraser: one Harp, Piano Forte and Guitar, 13 Music Books; a Portfolio, containing about 200 pieces of loose Music; a Silver Tumbler, inlaid with gold; Dessert and Tea Spoons; two Settees, of mahogany, covered with rug work; rosewood Desk and Paint Box, completely furnished, inlaid with brass, (imported); fancy work of every description; more than 300 pieces of Drawing and Painting, a gold Watch, Cross, and two Chains, with other articles of jewelry. Books to the amount of more than a hundred volumes, and all her wearing apparel, except what she had on at the time of her escape;

Miss Pearce: Harp and Stand.

Miss Russell: Harp, Music Books, Silver Tumbler, Spoons, Books, and wearing apparel.

Miss Jackson: a Piano Forte, Music Books, Paint Box and other drawing materials, Silver Goblet and Spoons, Books, and wearing apparel,

Miss Moriarty: a Piano Forte, Music Books, drawing materials, Spoons, Books, and wearing apparel.

Miss Fay: Guitar, Music Books, Paint Box and other drawing materials, a valuable Work Box, and wearing apparel.

The Misses Williams, (four sisters): a Guitar, two Paint Boxes and other drawing materials, Silver Tumblers and Spoons, fancy articles, a number of Paintings, Books, (English, French, Italian and Latin,) and all their wearing apparel.

Misses Whitney: Guitar, Music Books, Silver Tumblers and Spoons, wearing apparel and Books.

The other Young Ladies, as far as can be ascertained, lost their Silver Thimbles and Spoons, Music Books, Drawing and Painting Materials, valuable Birth-day Presents, Gold Watches, Rings, Chains, and various other Jewelry, Work Boxes, Books, and all their wearing apparel, with one exception. All the Plate of the community, except what belongs to their place of worship, was marked *Ursuline Community*, in full. They have also lost several Portraits of living and departed friends, Miniatures of relations and friends, Harps, Piano Fortes and Guitars, a superior grand Harmonicon; six Bureaus, filled with patterns for drawing and painting; Beds and Bedding, furnished by the community to every young lady, with the exception of three or four; Gold Medals, Watches and Chains, Clocks, two Libraries, one for the community, and the other for the young ladies, and innumerable other articles, among which may be numbered dear and precious mementos for the living and departed, which time will not permit me to detail.

*Nothing* was saved—and in the loss was also comprehended money, to a very large amount, in gold, silver, and bank bills, the sum of which cannot be exactly ascertained, as all the papers and account books were destroyed by the flames.

THE SUPERIOR of the Ursuline Convent.

Boston, August 15, 1834.

To the Editor of the Daily Advertiser and Patriot.

The interest the public have manifested in regard to the School of the Ursuline Community, whose buildings have, within the last week, been burnt to the ground, and the near connexion I have had with it for more than three years, renders, I trust, any apology unnecessary for

the statement I now make. No request, or intimation even, from any person or persons, has induced or influenced me to make this communication. But I frankly avow that the defamatory and vilely wicked reports which have come to my ears, circulated *insidiously*, and no doubt, by some with great *zeal* and *industry*, have, in my opinion, made it my duty to present myself to the public in a statement of such information as I have in regard to this Institution.

My first acquaintance with this Institution was in the year 1829, and my inquiries were then made to enable me to answer a letter from Mrs. Guisinger, of Philadelphia, the lady of Capt. Guisinger, of the United States Navy. In the discharge of my duty on that occasion, I acquired such information as induced me, two years afterwards, to place two of my children at this School, and also the child of a deceased friend, left to my care by the will of her father, and whose mother was also dead. From this time, viz: April, 1831, my acquaintance with the School became very intimate, and my visits to it were, on an average, from that time to the present, once a fortnight.

In December, 1832, the child of my deceased friend became sick, and after remaining at the Institution about two months, was brought to my house, and died there about one month afterwards.

During the sickness of this child, a greater intimacy and a more thorough acquaintance with the inmates of the institution was had, by me and Mrs. W., than had before existed.

In the month of June following the decease of this child, I placed my two younger daughters at this School,—and my four daughters have remained there ever since, except that my eldest has within that time been at home about three months.

The teachers at this School were educated to teach *female* youth.—Their early instructions were had with special reference to this, as their profession and *duty for life*, and when they have taken their religious vows they are withdrawn from the world, and have dedicated themselves singly to this service and duty.

The School was upon a Catholic foundation, and the teachers were all of a Catholic order of Nuns, viz: of the order of St. Ursuline. The School was, however, in a Protestant community, and more than three fourths of the scholars were of Protestant parents. The school was, therefore, essentially a Protestant School. This will be more readily granted, when it is understood that the teachers have always given the assurance that no formula or catechism should be put into the children's hands except such as the parents should direct, and that in the absence of any direction, the children should be instructed in religious matters only in the broad and clear principles which are to be found in the precepts and examples of our Saviour, without any sectarian bias whatever. This pledge has been always most faithfully redeemed in regard to my children,—and I believe it has been equally so in regard to all other children of Protestant parents.

The teachers have paid unwearied attention to the tempers and manners of the children. Their conduct on this most delicate and difficult of subjects has met with my entire satisfaction.

The principles of moral right appear ever to have been kept in steady view.

The health of my children while at the School has been always good. The child under my care, who was taken sick at the School and died at my house, died of consumption, as did also her parents. The attention to her while sick at the School was every thing that could be done. Parents, I think, would not have done more.

The progress of my children in their studies, and in the ornamental exercises, has been to my satisfaction. There has been no want of diligence or fidelity on the part of their teachers.

To all the vile surmises, and rumors, and reports which have been put forth to the public, I can only say, that it has appeared to me that as fast and as often as one is met and put down, another has been ushered off to take its place. In regard to the past, the present and the future, therefore, I have but one observation to make, one opinion to offer, and it is this—

If there is purity of life to be found by the fireside, or in the families of any of our distinguished Protestant clergymen throughout New England, it in no way surpasses that of these excellent women sisters of the order of St. Ursuline.

I have here presented a view of my means and opportunities of obtaining information, together with such information as I thought of most interest at this time—and my object has been to disabuse the public of the errors which have acquired currency in the community.

I add herewith for publication the prospectus of the school which was put into my hands in the Spring of 1831. The School had existed essentially the same as this prospectus presents up to the time its buildings were wantonly destroyed by an infuriated mob. This prospectus is now no other wise important than as showing what this School promised, and what all who knew it well knew that it was.

SAM'L K. WILLIAMS.

*Ursuline Community, Mount Benedict—Charlestown, Mass.*

This beautiful and extensive establishment is situated about two and a half miles from Boston, upon a delightful and healthy spot, commanding one of the most beautiful prospects in the United States.—In it young ladies are received from the age of six to that of fourteen.

The plan of education, pursued by the Ladies of this community, is extensive; comprehending all those attainments which may be found necessary, useful, and ornamental in society. Devoted by their Institute, to the education of female youth, they spare no pains to adorn their minds with useful knowledge, and to form their hearts to virtue.

To attain this twofold object, their first care is to instruct them in the great and sublime truths of religion;—to endeavor to impress them with its salutary maxims;—and to point out the duties it imposes on them towards their God, their parents, and superiors, towards other members of society, and towards themselves.

The school consists of two *Departments*, distinguished by the appellations of *Senior* and *Junior Class*, each occupying separate apartments, and having no communication whatever.

The young ladies in the *Junior Department* are taught the common branches of education, such as Reading, Writing, Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, History, ancient and modern; and particular attention is paid to Orthography. They are also taught all kinds of plain and fancy Needlework, and the *Extra Branches*, if required:—when sufficiently advanced, they are removed to the *Senior Department*.

Here are taught plain and ornamental Writing; Composition, both in prose and poetry;—ancient, modern, and natural History;—Chronology;—Mythology;—the use of the Globes;—Astronomy;—Rhetoric;—Logic;—Natural and Moral Philosophy;—Chemistry;—Arithmetic—Geometry;—and Botany;—every kind of useful and ornamental Needlework;—Japanning;—Drawing, in all its varieties;—Painting in Oil Colours;—also, Painting on Velvet, Satin, and Wood;

and the beautiful style of Mezzotinto and Poonah Painting. Music on different instruments is likewise taught.

The Young Ladies in this Department may also attend to Cookery, during the last quarter of their residence in the Institute. They will possess every advantage in this respect, being superintended by a person, who, to a perfect knowledge of the art, has joined many years' experience :—the charge is \$20.

To accelerate the advancement of the Young Ladies in their respective classes, every means is resorted to, which is calculated to act upon the youthful mind, in order to excite and maintain therein, a laudable emulation : such as, distinction of places; daily marks; weekly repetitions; privileges granted to application and merit; honorable mention, made every month, of those, whose assiduity in their studies, and excellency in good conduct, deserve approbation; premiums distributed at the end of the year, &c.

The annual examination takes place in the month of June, commencing on the 29th and continuing three days. At the close two Young ladies are crowned, one in the *Senior*, and the other in the *Junior Class*; the former receiving at the same time, a gold medal, and the latter, a silver one.—These young ladies shall have been in the Institution, one year, at least; during which time, they must have distinguished themselves, by their amiable deportment, general good conduct, and excellency in their studies.

The ladies who preside over this establishment, are scrupulously careful to supply those placed under their care, with abundant and wholesome food; and to watch over their health as well as their morals, with all the solicitude of maternal tenderness.—Cleanliness and neatness are rigorously attended to.

The garden adjoining the establishment, to which the young ladies always have access, during the hours of relaxation, is beautifully laid out, and consists of two acres of land. Besides this, they are allowed, on days of recreation, to extend their walks over the whole farm, which embraces twenty seven acres; always under the immediate superintendence of one or more of the ladies. During the summer season, they are allowed two acres of land, which are divided into flower gardens, and are cultivated by themselves.

Every young lady on entering the establishment, must be furnished with the following articles :—six napkins, six towels, one knife and fork, one silver goblet, one silver desert and tea spoon, and two prs. sheets and pillow-cases.

For the summer-uniform, each young lady must be provided with two dark slate colored pongee dresses;—four pair hose, of the same color;—two black bombazett aprons;—two white dresses,—four pairs white hose;—one light blue satin cape and sash;—a blue belt;—two black silk aprons;—a garden bonnet, and apron, with long sleeves, both made of slate colored cambric; and a Leghorn hat, trimmed with blue ribbon. For the winter uniform, each young lady is to be provided with two black Circassian frocks;—four prs. black cotton hose—(jet black is preferred to blue black, on account of durability); a dark blue merino cloak; and silk hood of the same color. [This article has been changed, varying the uniform.]

Parents being ever sensible to the happiness and welfare of their children, and anxious to know, even the smallest details of what concerns them, every three months, Bulletins will be issued, relating to their health, the extent of their application, and their progress in study. Care will be likewise taken that their children write to them the 15th of each month.

Three months' notice of the removal of each young lady is requested. No boarder is allowed to sleep out, except in case of illness. Permission to dine out is granted once a month. No visitors are allowed on Sundays. The religious opinions of the children are not interfered with. A vacation of six weeks is allowed every year, commencing on the 1st of July, and terminating on the 15th of August.

**THE CONVENT.** *Religious Instruction.*—Mr. Samuel K. Williams' of this city, who had four daughters in the convent at Charlestown, has published a statement in the Daily Advertiser, containing the following paragraph.

Then follows a quotation from the foregoing letter of Mr. Williams beginning, 'The School was upon a Catholic foundation,' and ending, 'and I believe it has been equally so in regard to all other children of Protestant parents.'

This statement appears to us, and to some other persons, extremely vague and unsatisfactory. Will Mr. Williams answer the following questions?

Had the pupils in the Convent *Bibles* in their possession, in any language which they could easily read and understand? If so, in what language, and what translation? If they had none, why had they not? If they had, were they permitted to use them at their own discretion? If there were any restrictions upon their use of the Bible, what were they?—Did the pupils, while there, use Catholic forms of worship? In what ceremonies, or forms of worship, not in general use among Protestants, did they bear part? If in any, was it required of them? If not, how were they induced to do it?

These questions are suggested by information, apparently worthy of credit, concerning other convents. We will gladly insert in our paper definite answers to these questions from Mr. Williams, or from any other person, who will give definite answers and be responsible for them.—*Recorder.*

*To the Editor of the Boston Recorder.*

I answer the questions you propose in the *Recorder* of the 5th inst.

Every pupil at the Convent school was required to have a *Bible*, or at least that part of it called the *New Testament*. Each of my children had one or the other of these books in the common *English translation*, and the same they had used at the Protestant schools in the city before going to the Convent school—and these books they were not only permitted to read at pleasure, but were required to read them on the Sabbath.

It was also made known to me, at the time I first put my children at this school, that if I would furnish them with any book or books of prayers, the teachers would take charge of them so far as to have such book or books of prayers read and studied by my children. And I did accordingly furnish my children with the book of prayers published by the Rev. Mr. Brooks of Hingham, and with the prayers used at the Stone Chapel in this city. And I have reason to be satisfied with the use my children made of these books while at this school, and know that it was a matter of gratification to the teachers that these books were furnished.

The Protestant children had prayers daily by themselves, morning and night, the children in turn reading the prayers in the order designated by the teachers. I send you herewith copies of the prayers which

were thus read. At noon the children together repeated the Lord's prayer.

All the children attended mass in the Chapel on the Sabbath. This was the only Catholic service the Protestant children were *required* to attend. This service was in the Latin language. And my children, and all other Protestant children, were not only allowed, but were required, in attending this service, to have with them either such prayer book as had been furnished them by their parents, or their Bible or Testament, and to employ their minds in reading the same.

In no other ceremonies, or forms of worship, not in general use among Protestants, did the Protestant children at this school bear a part, nor was it required of them to do so.

It has been intimated in some one of the papers of the city, that the children were not allowed to pass the Sabbath out of the school; that they were all required to cross themselves, and that they were also required to read the Scriptures from a *Catholic Bible*. To the two last intimations I state, that it is not true that my children, or that any Protestant children have ever been *required* to cross themselves at any time, or on any occasion while at this school. Nor have they ever been *required* or even allowed to read from a Catholic Bible.

In regard to passing the Sabbath out of the school, I can only say, that my children passed the Sabbath with me as often as I asked to have them, which was about every fourth Sabbath in the year.

SAMUEL K. WILLIAMS.

#### MORNING PRAYERS.

Most holy and adorable Trinity, one God in three persons, I believe that thou art here present; I adore thee with the most profound humility; I desire, in the sincerity of my heart, to praise and glorify thee now and forever.

I give thee thanks, O Lord, from the bottom of my heart, for all the favors I have received from thee. It is thy loving goodness which has brought me safe to the beginning of this day. I mean, with the help of thy grace, to serve and honor thee, during the whole course of it. I offer up to thee all my thoughts, words, and actions. Give them thy blessing, that they may all be animated with thy love, and tend to thy greater glory.

Adorable Jesus! divine Model of that perfection to which we should all aspire, I will endeavor, this day, to follow thy example; to be mild, humble, chaste, zealous, patient, and charitable like thee. I will be particularly attentive not to relapse this day, into those sins I have so often committed, but to guard against them, with thy gracious assistance.

Thou knowest, O Lord, my weakness. I can do nothing without the help of thy grace. Do not refuse, O merciful Lord, to bestow it on me, according to my wants. Give me strength, that I may avoid the evil thou forbiddest, practice the good thou commandest, cheerfully bear whatever trials and crosses thou shalt be pleased to send upon me.

Here they recited the Lord's Prayer.

#### HYMN.

The rising sun now brings the day,  
And drives the shades of night away;  
Eternal Light, O God, inspire,  
With heavenly songs, our morning choir.

Let our first voices sound thy name,  
Thy love, our first desires inflame,

That all our following actions may  
By thee be sanctified to-day.

So rule our minds that they may be  
The unspotted seat of chastity ;  
Shut out all access by which the eyes  
Let in deceit and vanities.

O God of peace, our tongues restrain,  
That we from quarrels may refrain,  
From slander let our speech be free ;  
Let's live in peace and charity.

This prayer, most gracious Father, hear ;  
Thy equal Son incline his ear,  
Who with the Holy Ghost and thee,  
Doth live and reign eternally.

#### EVENING PRAYERS.

I adore thee, O my God, and most humbly acknowledging my unworthiness, in the presence of thy eternal Majesty. I believe in thee, because thou art Truth itself; I hope in thee, because thou art faithful to thy word; I love thee with my whole heart, because thou art infinitely amiable; and, for thy sake, I love my neighbor as myself.

How shall I be able to thank thee, O Lord for all thy favors? Thou hast thought of me from all eternity; thou hast brought me forth from nothing; thou hast given thy life to redeem me; and thou continuest still, daily to load me with thy favors.

Alas! my God, what return can I make thee for all thy benefits and, in particular, for the favors of this day? Join me, ye blessed spirits, and all ye saints, in praising the God of mercies, who is so bountiful to so unworthy a creature.

O Holy Ghost, eternal source of light, remove the darkness which hides from me the number and grievousness of my offences. Show me, I beseech thee, the sins I have this day committed, in thought, word and action. Give me a feeling sense of them, that I may detest them from my heart, and dread nothing so much, as ever to commit them again.

Here they said the Lord's Prayer.

#### HYMN.

Before the closing of the day,  
Creator, thee we humbly pray  
That, for thy wonted mercy's sake,  
Thou us into protection take.

May nothing in our minds excite  
Vain dreams and phantoms of the night ;  
Our enemies repress, that so  
Our bodies no uncleanness know.

To Jesus, from a Virgin sprung,  
Be glory given, and praises sung ;  
The same to God the Father be,  
And Holy Ghost eternally.

These answers are intelligible. That we had some reason to ask them, will appear from the following. It is from a report of a committee of the Synod of Indiana, signed "Ransom Hawley, Chairman."

A daughter of pious parents was sent to one of their schools in this state, and boarded with her instructors. She was soon reproached for reading her Bible; this sacred treasure was taken from her, and not returned until she promised not to read it. She wrote a letter to inform her parents that she was dissatisfied, and wished to return. But unfortunately this, like all letters, having to pass the inspection of the principal, was not permitted to be sent. This unhappy pupil found no way to communicate her views to her friends for several months. If any of her friends came to see her, one at least of the sisters must be present to hear the conversation, and in her presence she had not courage enough to make known her situation. In this unpleasant situation she remained about five months, and by dropping a hint to her father, soon bid farewell to this nursery of popery.

The Vermont Chronicle of last week states, that four young ladies from a town in Windsor Co. Vt. were pupils last summer in a nunnery in Montreal. Their Bibles and all Protestant religious books were taken from them, they not allowed to walk out without a nun in company, and were required to attend Catholic worship exclusively. Their case was stated to us some months since, on what we considered good authority. The Convent at Charlestown seems to have differed very materially from some others.

It is of no use to try to keep the public still on this subject. The public will not be satisfied, without evidently sufficient reasons. We shall therefore freely throw out whatever pertinent questions occur to our own mind, or are suggested by others; and our columns are open to any pertinent reply, from any responsible source. With these views, we submit the following communication.

MR. EDITOR.—Although all candid, respectable men disapprove of the burning of the Convent by a mob, and hold, that existing evils should be corrected only by moral influence, public sentiment and the law, yet many, *very many*, of the most respectable and influential of our citizens, have a deep conviction that *Convents have been, are now, and while continued, ever will be, highly injurious to the great interests of the community*. They do not believe that a company of *unmarried women* can be placed, for life, under the sole control of a company of *unmarried men*; be excluded from the society of others, except so far as their directors are pleased to permit; and every thing which may be said or done, be hidden from inspection and kept an inviolable secret, without great mischief accruing to the persons themselves and to the public. Though nearly all condemn the outrage committed by the mob, and hope that the perpetrators may be brought to justice, yet the conviction is daily deepening, that the establishment of such Institutions is *anti-christian, anti-republican*, strongly to be deprecated, and in every lawful and Christian manner, to be strenuously, perseveringly, and unitedly opposed, by all the intelligently patriotic and humane of every Christian denomination in New England. There is an ardent desire to have the facts connected with Convents, published; especially the facts connected with the Convent in Charlestown. Will you, not, Mr. Editor, invite some one, acquainted with these facts, to publish them, for the information and benefit of the community? And from them, as well as the principles and regulations of such institutions generally, the community will be able to judge whether their establishment is consistent with its highest interests.

PROVE ALL THINGS.  
Recorder.

## TO THE PUBLIC.

The Selectmen of Charlestown, in their Card of 15th inst. promised to lay before the public, a Statement of all the facts, which might come to their knowledge, in relation to the wanton destruction of the Convent, on the night of the 11th inst. The *Bunker Hill Aurora*, of Saturday, 16th inst. has, however, given so full an account of that catastrophe, and as examinations are now pending before the proper authorities, the result of which will shortly appear before the public,—the Selectmen have little else to perform, than to give some brief account of their own official conduct in that affair.

Previous to August 4th, there had been some vague reports, such as that a Nun had made her escape from the Convent, had again returned as some said against her will, &c. but these reports were for the most part confined to a small circle, and created little or no alarm. At the date above named (Aug. 4), it being the monthly meeting of the Selectmen, a representation was made to them that the female alluded to was probably then improperly and unlawfully restrained in her liberty, consequently a Committee was appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the case, and if found necessary to ask legal advice, and report. The week ensuing passed away with occasionally hearing of some expressions of dissatisfaction about the detention of the lady in question till Sunday 10th, when several placards were found posted up in several parts of the town, one of which contained the following words:

“To the Selectmen of Charlestown!! Gentlemen—It is currently reported that a mysterious affair has lately happened at the *Nunnery* in Charlestown, now it is your duty gentlemen to have this affair investigated *immediately*, if not the *Truckmen* of Boston, will *demolish* the *Nunnery* thursday night—August 14.”

Boston Aug. 9, 1834.

On that day (Sunday) one of the board called at the Convent and had an interview with the lady Superior, and also with the Nun who had occasioned the excitement, and came away satisfied that there was no cause for any complaints against the Institution. This was the same evening communicated to other of the Selectmen, when it was proposed if agreeable to the government of the Convent, that they as a body should visit and examine the whole establishment.—Accordingly the Chairman of the Board called on the Bishop at his house the next morning, and made known to him that there did then exist some considerable degree of excitement, and that it was difficult to foretell to what extent it might proceed, and proposed to him for the Selectmen to make a full examination into the whole affair, and report their doings to the public.

The proposal met with the Bishop's entire approbation, and he gave assurance that the Selectmen should have free access to every part of the House. Accordingly they lost no time in delay, but on the same afternoon (Monday), made a most thorough examination of the whole premises: that occupied their time till about sun setting, when they made up their report or certificate, which was immediately sent for publication both in Boston and Charlestown. It may be proper here to say that when the Selectmen left the Convent on Monday evening, they had not the *least apprehension* that any riotous proceedings were about to take place *on that night*, and it appears that Judge Fay, and also Mr. Thaxter of Watertown, had both left their daughters there at the School *after the departure* of the Selectmen.

So far as we have gone, it will be difficult to point out any remissness or want of promptitude on the part of the Selectmen. They did not wait for the Proprietors of the Convent to request their official aid, but went in person and proffered it to them—and they had good reason to believe that their statement was to appear on Tuesday would tend in some degree to quiet and allay the public mind.

We come now to the riot and conflagration. About 9 o'clock the mob began to assemble, one of the Selectmen [Mr. Runey] living in that vicinity, was early on the ground and used his utmost endeavours to still the tumult, but which proved ineffectual; soon after this a fire was made at some distance, in an easterly direction from the Convent, and the bells rang (the usual alarm for fires.) Mr. Runey at this time left the mob and rode into town to get the assistance of his colleagues. They, on arriving at the Convent, found that the mob was about forcing in the front door which opened into the room containing the altar, &c. Soon after the mob entered in, two of the Selectmen went in among them, and made an appeal to their humanity, by saying [in words as near as can be recollected] that the story which had been told about the Nun, was entirely false, that she was then in the house and should, if required be produced; that there were then in the house a large number of females, mostly children, and one lady sick, and that a certificate would appear in the morning from the Selectmen that must satisfy every one. This seemed to produce a momentary pause, but the work of destruction was again resumed, when some one said that, that Cross must come down, "but that no female should be injured.

Immediately on this, several voices were heard to cry out for a torch; the object of this could not be mistaken, and the idea of seeing an edifice like that, containing within its walls so large a number of female children, set fire to, at midnight, as may well be supposed, produced no other feelings than those of horror and concern. And they were then told that if they would then desist and disperse, they might possibly escape detection; but if a torch was brought in among them, they would most assuredly be exposed; but this had no effect, and not being able to identify any one of them, it was thought to be imprudent to remain there any longer. At this time, a torch was seen approaching; when all other considerations were absorbed for the safety and protection of the inmates; and recollecting that their sleeping chambers had been seen on the north-west side of the building, the two Selectmen went immediately round to that place, and called aloud for the Superior, &c. They soon became satisfied that they had all left the place in safety. During all this time not more than four to six persons were seen so as to be known to the Selectmen then present, and even these were detached from each other.

Many citizens had been deceived by the bonfire, and had returned again to their homes—as afterwards appeared—so that in looking round for assistance there was none at hand, and this is by no means extraordinary, it being at midnight hour, and the distance from the centre of the Peninsula is about one and a half miles—at this time the windows and furniture from the upper stories were falling in different directions, and judging it unsafe to remain longer in that situation, without being able to be of any service, came again round to the front of the building, and from thence down into the street. The mob at this time, appeared with their lights to be in about every part of the Convent, and very soon the smoke indicated that it was on fire in many places at once.

The charge comes in this place against the Selectmen for not calling

out the military, and those who make this charge should consider that to have called them out, would have been the work of some hours, and that they could only have arrived to have witnessed the last scene of the conflagration. Now then let the candid portion of the public judge, what good effect such a measure could have been? Where would have been the perpetrators? Their object was accomplished; the destruction of the edifice was certain; they must have been apprised of the approach of military force. Can it then be supposed, that there would have remained a single one in the character of an incendiary or rioter, —at any rate, the Selectmen, who *were on the ground*, thought that, not the best or wisest course; they believed that many more of those concerned in the destruction of the Convent would be brought to justice by allowing them to expose themselves to the gaze of witnesses, than by any other course which it was in their power to pursue, and they still believe that in this opinion they made no mistake, as disclosures are making which must ultimately result in the detection and apprehension of many of the offenders.

The public have here the reasons which operated in the minds of the Selectmen why they did not call on the militia, and why they did not attempt to oppose force to force, when their own strength did not exceed four or five persons, to combat with some hundred of infuriated rioters.

It is not very uncommon for some persons removed at a safe distance from danger, to attach fault to those actually engaged, and to make boasts of exploits which they themselves would have achieved, had they been present; but these kind of victories, which may appear so brilliant on paper, are not always so *easy* to reduce to practice.

The *head and front* offence, is the exceptionable terms made use of, in the hand bill issued by the Selectmen on Wednesday morning, 13th, and for this they have already made explanation, which they hope will be considered as satisfactory; but it may not be improper here, to name some of the circumstances, under which this offensive paragraph was written. The Selectmen and Committee of Vigilance were in session on Wednesday morning—and were then listening to numerous complaints of their fellow citizens, occasioned by a tumultuous and riotous body of men, which came over Warren Bridge, on Tuesday night, went to the Convent grounds, and committed new depredations on those premises. The Boston Transcript of Wednesday, 13th, gives an account of them as follows.—

“A mob collected about 10 o'clock at the Arsenal, finding probably that it was well guarded, they proceeded *with threats* to the Catholic Church, where they were made acquainted with the presence of the Police, and marched on, without making much disturbance, to Faneuil Hall. Here again they found preparations for their reception, and proceeded *thence to Charlestown*.”

It was while hearing the complaints against *this mob*, that the offensive words in the hand bill were written, and the public will now judge, whether there were not some extenuating circumstances even for this most heinous crime.

But was it magnanimous to bestow on the magistrates and municipal authorities of a town, containing perhaps one eighth part of the population of the city, the most opprobrious epithets for not arresting the progress, and securing the persons of a mob, that had paraded and marched in triumph and with impunity, through some of the principal streets of the city? Of *this*, also, let the public judge. There have been, within our own recollection, acts of violence perpetrated in Boston, some of

which are not very dissimilar from this in our own town; not many years since, the Boston Theatre, the interior of which was nearly destroyed; that was done in the midst of a dense population, where an opposing force was at hand, but no one recollects that the civil authorities were assailed with the grossest abuse and vituperation, because they were unable to prevent that occurrence.

It is not, however, to be thought strange, that such an outrage as we have witnessed, so disgraceful in its character, and so destructive of property, should excite the keenest sensibilities of the community—and, that they should suppose, that there was a want of forecast, and of precautionary measures, which might have prevented so melancholy an occurrence,—all this is not to be wondered at, and the Selectmen deeply regret that their efforts to arrest its progress throughout the whole affair, were not more successful—but that they did not make use, *the best use*, of all the means in their power for that purpose; *that*, they utterly deny, and they believe that the public, upon a due consideration of all the circumstances of the case, will come to the same conclusion.

THOMAS HOOPER,  
ABIJAH GOODRIDGE,  
ABIJAH MONROE,  
SAMUEL POOR,  
STEPHEN WILEY,  
JOHN RUNEY, } Selectmen.

Charlestown, August 23, 1834.

#### BOARD OF ENGINEERS.

**BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT.**—The undersigned, appointed at a meeting of the Board of Engineers, August 13, 1834, to examine into the truths of various reports and allegations against certain members and companies of the Fire Department, while on duty at the late fire in Charlestown, have attended to that duty, and beg leave to submit the following Report:—

That, at the request of the officers and members of Engine Company No. 13, we proceeded forthwith to examine each member of said company, and subsequently all other persons who could be found, possessing any knowledge of facts, and are of opinion that said allegations and reports are entirely without any just foundation. We have endeavored to trace the various reports to their origin, and deeply regret that some of the most respectable citizens of Charlestown should, without evidence, charge upon those who have ever been able and ready to assist them in the hour of need, in participating in one of the blackest crimes in the annals of man. The premeditated attack upon the Convent, so universally known in Charlestown, appears, from extensive inquiry, to have been almost entirely unknown to the members of the Boston Fire Department, at the time of the first alarm on the night of the fire; and those who had heard from Charlestown of the existing difficulties and expected riot, had understood that Thursday night was the time designated. Of the whole division permitted to go to Charlestown, only Nos. 13 and 3 reached the fire; the other engine companies, on their way, being informed that the fire was a barn in Medford, returned to the city, and at the second alarm, none of them arrived until the building was entirely enveloped in flames; consequently, they could not have participated in the riot. The Chief Engineer, with one of your Committee, attempted to form a line of Boston Engines, but was advised, by the Engineers of Charlestown, to desist. This fact, we think, will fully exculpate all the companies from the charge of neglect of duty.

No. 3 arrived at the avenue leading to the Convent, at the time No. 13 was returning to the road—met them about half way up the hill—turned round, and followed them out, and, after stopping in the road a few moments, returned towards the city; when about half of a mile distant, discovered the Convent in flames, and again repaired to the fire. We have been unable to find any reports against this company, most of the allegations being confined to No. 13; a brief narration of facts, which are fully substantiated, in relation to the conduct of this company, we think will best correct any erroneous impressions, if any are yet existing, and counteract the efforts of certain persons to prejudice the public mind against the company. No. 13 was taken from the house, in Leveret Street, by six or eight of the company, at the first alarm, who were joined in their progress by members and other persons, on their way to the fire. There were no outcries, or other indications of disorder exhibited on the way. When passing Charlestown engines, was cheered—a mark of approbation, frequently bestowed upon the first engine arriving from the city. The engine did not stop, but continued on towards the Convent, the fire, or bonfire, being on the hill on their right, where the officers and members intended to go. When the engine arrived at the entrance of the avenue, which was open, a large number of persons, variously estimated at from one to three hundred, seized hold of the rope, or otherwise accompanied the engine up the avenue, with cries of "the fire this way," "down with the Nunneries," "go ahead, hook and ladder," &c

When the engine arrived at the Convent, the rope was abandoned by the persons who joined at the gate; at this moment, some person cried out, "Now off with your badges, and go to work," (now known to be Pond, never a member or volunteer of the Fire Department.) The Captain finding there was a mob and riot, immediately gave orders to man the rope, and take the engine into the road, which was promptly obeyed. Immediately on stopping in the road, the Captain ordered that no man should leave the engine, and told the next officer to take off his badge and go up to the building, to see if he could find any of 13's men, and if he could, to send them directly to the engine, who, after thorough search, reported that none could be found; that, while in the road, about the time the building was fired, Mr. Hooper, Chairman of the Selectmen, came to the engine, and inquired if the torch then in the building belonged to them? That the Foreman replied, "We have only five torches, and you see they are all here." Mr. J. E. Jones, not a member of the company, heard the conversation, and counted the torches. The company remained with their engine until the other Boston engines arrived, and went up to the fire (about an eighth of a mile from where the engine stood) to gratify their curiosity, as others did. The company, from the beginning, have courted investigation, being willing to undergo any examination required in Boston, Charlestown, or Cambridge, and have been subjected to great perplexity, inconvenience, and loss of time. No one who will candidly examine all the evidence and circumstances, can fail to acquiesce with us, in the opinion of the Justices at Cambridge, who, after *laborious* legal investigation, express their belief in the good motives and honorable conduct of engine company No. 13. We think Capt. James Quinn entitled to much praise, for his prudent and decided conduct at the fire, and also the company under his command, for their prompt obedience and orderly conduct on this, as on other occasions.

The propriety of the Board of Engineers examining into the conduct of those by law under their direction and command, when on duty, can-

not be questioned. Your Committee, in conclusion, would state, that they have furnished the Boston Investigating Committee with all the information they have been able to obtain, connected with the object of their inquiry: all of which is respectfully submitted.

WILLIAM G. EATON,  
DAVID KIMBALL,  
DAVID TILLSON,  
R. A. NEWELL,  
JOHN SHELTON,  
} Committees.

BOSTON, AUGUST 27.—At a meeting of the Board of Engineers, the above Report was read, accepted, and ordered to be printed.

A. J. LEPEAN, *Secretary.*

[*From the National Intelligencer.*]

### THE OUTRAGE AT CHARLESTOWN.

Characteristic of that liberality in all that concerns the rights of conscience, which has marked your course as the conductors of a public journal, I have read with pleasure, but by no means with surprise, your remarks upon the proceedings of the Charlestown mob—proceedings, which, while one particle of respect shall exist for law and order, or one feeling of humanity shall pervade the human heart, will consign its ferocious authors and abettors to the execration and abhorrence of mankind. Who could have believed it—who, in the wildest excursions of the most vivid imagination, could have conceived that a deed so base and lawless, so fierce and cowardly, could have been perpetrated against a set of defenceless females, whose sex alone, even for the most unfortunate portion of them, claims the compassion of the benevolent, and the protection of all? Yet *it has been done!* Yes, even in our own land of equal laws and rights—even under a Constitution which declares, that each one is free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience; even, too, in an age, so boastful of the improvement of the mind, and the humanizing of the heart, the deed has been done. The most savage passions of the human mind had been aroused, the hell-hounds of persecution had been let loose, and a set of unoffending females, with no other weapons than their prayers, with no other protection than their God and the laws—have beheld their domicile stormed by a band of midnight ruffians, and this their home and their sanctuary, their home by right and by law, their home, endeared to them by the most delightful associations of existence, reduced to ashes before their weeping eyes. Poor persecuted victims to the fanatics' rage!—And so persecuted, because they were Catholics! And was their none to pity and support them? None! And was there none there to shield and protect them? None! Not a voice was heard in their favor; not an arm was raised in their defense. Charlestown looked on with folded arms, while the ruffian work of conflagration, of plunder and ruin, was consummating before their eyes.

What a scene was this! What a spectacle for a country which boasts of its freedom! But, Messrs. Editors, if it be painful to contemplate such a scene as this—if it be revolting to our feelings, to look down upon a theatre where we behold every black and fiendish passion wrought into the tempest's fury, and devastating every principle human and divine—if the heart throb with unusual agony, whilst, by the glare of the midnight flames, the eye beholds the affrighted matrons with their little children, flying into the streets, and imploring protection from persons, perhaps, never seen before; it is some relief to this hideous

exhibition of every thing that is foul, base, and cowardly, to behold, as in contrast to it, the conduct of the Catholics there, on this awful and trying occasion. That conduct, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, was as glorious to them, as it was beneficial to the public. It was the triumph of principle over passion—of religion over the fierce feelings of revenge. For, Messrs. Editors, Catholics are but men, after all. Descended from Adam, they have the passions which in common belong to the whole human race; and, not unfrequently, under their influence, they sometimes shake the very foundations of society, and add to the long catalogue of its crimes. Such are Catholics; and this being the case, was there not much ground to apprehend, that on this occasion, forgetting, in the excitement of their passions, their obligation to the law, they would have trampled it under foot, and been themselves the instruments of its vengeance? They had seen much, before even this, to arouse their passions, and whet their resentment. They had seen their religion misrepresented and slandered, in almost every Protestant press in our country. They had seen their priesthood charged with the commission of the foulest crimes, and designs hostile to the liberty of our land. They had seen their convents represented as the haunts of the most disgusting turpitude, and their inmates as the most infamous of their sex. They have seen all this, and forbearance marked their course. But, sirs, they were now called upon to witness a spectacle very different from this. They were now called upon to witness, not the vituperations of the press—not the roar of empty declamation—not the bold accusation unsubstantiated by one solitary proof—not the invective of the most deep-rooted malignity—but the torch of the fanatic, and the conflagration of their property. They saw one of the most outrageous violations of their rights, which had been perpetrated in this, or any other country. They saw a convent burnt to the ground, and its inmates, at the dead hour of the night, turned into the streets, almost without apparel. They saw its church robbed of its sacred vessels, and then reduced to ashes. They saw the resting-place of the dead invaded by ruffians, the coffin of its harmless tenant rudely burst open, and its contents pilfered by the monsters—and this, because they were Catholics. They saw all this, and was it not quite enough, sirs, to stir up their passions to mutiny and resistance? Was it not quite enough to rouse the fierce spirits of revenge, and impel them to deeds of retaliation and blood? The law, at least for the Catholics, had slumbered; and, in this state, how natural for passion to grasp the sword, and vengeance to direct the stroke. Protection, at least for the Catholic, was suspended, and I need not say to you, sirs, that on such occasions men defend themselves. Such a state of things did exist in Charlestown. That Town was converted into a mob. The law there had ceased to be supreme, the bands of social intercourse had been burst asunder, and man was let loose, with no other guide than his passions, maddened by fury. But, notwithstanding this, the Catholics moved not an inch. Attached to the church of their ancestors, they listened to the discourse of her venerable bishop, and, submitting to his authority, they were guided, as they should be, by his counsels. And I, as a Catholic, thank God that it was so; or else might have been exhibited a scene of carnage and of blood, from which humanity would have turned with horror and dismay.

In pondering, Messrs. Editors, upon the scenes of Charlestown—scenes which, for their cold-blooded malignity and fiend-like atrocity, stand, under all the circumstances, unparalleled in the annals of nations, the mind is naturally led to inquire into the causes which pro-

duced them. A stranger to our history, our Constitution and laws, might, on contemplating the ashes of the Ursuline Convent, inquire whether this Institution was erected in contravention of the Constitution, and in defiance of law? No. The Constitution asserts the right, and the law protects it. If, as may indeed be supposed, without the imputation of any extraordinary ignorance, he were unacquainted with the rise, progress, and objects of these Institutions, he should go on and ask whether this Institution was hostile to the principles of morality? This question, too, must be answered in the negative by every one whose mind is not clouded by ignorance, or swayed by malice. For, as to the right, who, that is acquainted with our government, will venture to deny it? Who will be bold enough to assert that a woman may or may not marry—may or may not frequent the society of the gay and fashionable; or, if to her it seem fit, retire to the cloister of a Convent? The right to do either cannot be denied; and as to the morality of Convents, it is rather too late in the day to object to them on this score. Established, almost at the day-break of Christianity, Monasteries and Convents have existed under all the varied forms of government in the civilized world. In England, Protestant as she is, they exist. In England, even when her penal laws were unpealed, they existed, and were protected by the law. In Ireland, too—Ireland doomed to bear the lash of persecution for more than three hundred years—they were established—they existed—and in the law, they found their protection. The morality, then, of these Institutions, cannot be called in question. It is settled—settled by the agreement of governments—settled, sirs, by the almost universal consent of mankind. Why, then, Messrs. Editors, are they opposed with so much violence in our country? Whence, under a Constitution and government like ours—under a government and laws which proclaim universal protection in the exercise of the rights of conscience, has proceeded this ferocious, unprecedented, and lawless attack on the Ursuline Convent of Charlestown? This is an important question, and, if I mistake not, when traced to its source, the cause will be found in the operation of those vile prejudices, and that rancorous and deadly hatred, which have been excited against the Catholic and his Church. Thus *his* Church—*his* Church, which bears upon its walls, the frost of more than eighteen centuries—*his* Church, which is the Church of the Universe—*his* Church, which numbers more than two hundred millions of souls, as her children—*his* Church, which, as *you* know, has been the nursery of some of the most illustrious men that have ever adorned any age or nation—*his* Church, which has carried the torch of science in one hand and the flambeau of faith in the other, into every portion of the civilized globe—*this* Church, whose enactments are friendly to rational liberty, and in strict coincidence with the most rigid morality—*this* Church, which, but a little while ago, saw all Russia, all Germany, all France, all England, in fact, the whole Christian world reposing in her arms, and yielding, in faith and morals, to her authority—is represented as a structure of idolatry, superstition and crime, whose head is the anti-christ of the Apocalypse, and whose members are monsters whom it is just to destroy, and criminal to spare. Such is the portrait, Messrs. Editors, which is drawn of the Catholic and his Church—and although *you* know it to be false—false and black as the envenomed mind which conceived it—yet, thrown as it is among the ignorant, the bigoted and fanatical, it is well calculated to arouse their resentment, and direct it against the rights, and persons and property of the Catholics. Such has been the consequence of such vituperation in Europe. The penal laws of England have attested it.

The conflagration at Charlestown proves it. It is high time, Messrs. Editors, for this disgraceful course to be abandoned. The religion of the Catholic commands him to love his brethren of all religious denominations; and to consider the invasion of their rights as the invasion of his own; and he is a bad Catholic and an enemy to our Government, who would not, sword in hand, if it be necessary, fly to the assistance of his Protestant brethren, whenever the spirit of religious persecution dared to molest them in the exercise of their constitutional rights.

I cannot conclude, Messrs Editors, without making a few remarks on the course of Boston, on the ferocious conduct of the mob at Charlestown. Boston has done well. She has added another to the laurels which she so justly wears. The Cradle of American Liberty, she has the boldness to proclaim, and the nerve to maintain the unalienable rights of man. The voices of men were heard at her meeting of Faneuil Hall, who have done honor to their own country, and would have reflected lustre upon any period of history. The Otises and Quincys are not ordinary men. They are men known, and honored in the Republic of Letters; and whose course at the late meeting at Faneuil Hall, will endear them to the friends of civil and religious liberty in every portion of the Globe.

12th August, 1834.

A CATHOLIC.

#### THE URSULINE CONVENT.

*From Mrs. Hale's Magazine.*

Who has not heard of the outrage perpetrated at Charlestown? A community of helpless women attacked, and, with a large number of female pupils, compelled to flee in the darkness of night from their abode, escaping at the peril of their lives, from the rage of lawless men, who were demolishing the pleasant dwelling, with its furniture and dear ornaments, and who did not feel their fury satiated till the buildings were sacked and burned, the beautiful and cultivated grounds ravaged and trodden down, and even the tomb, the sanctuary of the dead violated.

Such was the first awful act of the drama; the conclusion must inevitably carry shame, sorrow and suffering to many a heart, and into families, who little dreamed that their sons would, within sight of Bunker Hill, bring dishonor upon the American name, by the commission of a crime, which has no parallel in the history of civilized nations.

Some may think that the various journals have sufficiently discussed this affair; but besides its importance as a violation of the public peace, it appeals directly to the sympathies of our sex; it is a cruelty, a wrong to woman, at which every female heart must revolt, being committed against women who, by the regulations of christian society, are entitled not only to the protection of the laws, but to the protection of man also. These feelings must prompt every lady, Protestant as well as Catholic, to condemn the outrage. Still, in order to judge correctly of its causes and consequences, information is necessary, and this we have taken every means in our power to procure. The result we will give in a sketch of the Convent and its catastrophe, and, believe that the details, many of which we have learned from the Superior, cannot but be interesting to our readers.

The Ursuline Convent was established in Boston in 1820, under the care of Madame St. Joseph\* as Superior. The order of St Ursuline are, by their religious profession, devoted to the education of female

\* Madame St. Joseph died in 1823, and was succeeded by Madame St. George.

youth ; consequently, the institution was, to all intents and purposes, a female seminary. This is an important feature in conventional life, which we American Protestants rarely consider. We think of nunneries as places of prayer and penance, superstitious rites and idle observances ; we talk of nuns as beings shut out not only from the enjoyments of society, but from its useful employments also, condemned to exist without pursuits, pleasures or hopes that relate to this world.—Such may be the case with some of the most rigid orders, the Trappists, for example, but as relating to the majority of those who take the veil, it is an erroneous idea. The nuns are neither idle nor useless members of the State. Those who are not devoted to the instruction of the young are employed with their needles, and in curious and tasteful fancy works, which are sold for the benefit of the order. In this way they earn their own support. But teaching is their great business, and in all Catholic countries nunneries are now almost the only boarding schools where young ladies are educated. Till the time of Madame Campan, we believe, no female seminary except the nunnery was known in France. And many noble English Protestant families sent their daughters thither to be educated, because of the superior advantages which these Catholic institutions offered in all that was then deemed the requisite accomplishments of a high bred lady. To some of these conventional seminaries particular immunities were granted, on account of their being selected as places of education for the princesses of the blood royal. And surely some regard is due from our sex to that order of women who, through the ages of ignorance and darkness, devoted themselves to the instruction of female youth. True, the system was very defective, but it was the best which the state of society permitted.

Whether the convent is a fitting place for the education of the daughters of our free citizens, is a question for parents to decide. There can, however, be no question that the Catholics of these United States have the right to establish such seminaries if they choose ; and we never heard there was any objection when the Ursuline Convent was opened in Boston for the admission of pupils. It was a new thing, and probably the romance connected with the idea of living in a convent with real nuns who had taken the vows, and wore black veils, and kept themselves apart from the world, had some effect in procuring pupils. The success of the experiment was soon certain ; but the building in which the nuns resided was not in a pleasant situation, and they concluded to leave the city, and establish themselves where they could have gardens and grounds for those exercises and recreations which are so indispensable to the health of children and sedentary persons. In pursuance of this plan, they purchased an estate of about twenty-seven acres in Charlestown, and in nearly the centre of their grounds, on a hill which they named Mount Benedict, they erected a spacious and handsome brick edifice. Hither they removed in 1826, and entered zealously on their labors of improving their property, and 'rearing the tender minds' committed to their care.\*

The situation of the place they had chosen was splendid ; Mount Benedict commanded the most varied and delightful scenery ; Charlestown, Cambridge, Boston, the river and the harbor with its islands, might all be viewed from the windows of the convent. But when they purchased the estate its 'capabilities' was all it had to recommend it ; Mount Benedict was a rough, bleak hill, and the land around a broken

\* The number of pupils was fifty, the nuns TEN—not more than was necessary to manage the school.

looking waste. In eight years the institution and its grounds were the admiration of strangers, and the pride of Catholics.

The school in the meantime, had continued to increase. During the last year more pupils had been offered than could be accepted. The season had been propitious; their gardens were in a state of high cultivation; every thing around them looked beautiful and flourishing, and nothing portended the destruction which was at hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Monday evening, August the 11th, the inmates of the Ursuline Convent, in number sixty-six, retired to rest at the usual hour, half past seven. All retired, with the exception of the Superior, and one sister who was a watcher by the bed-side of an invalid nun. The Superior felt some anxiety; she had heard rumors that an excitement was gathering against her, on account of transactions which were reported to have taken place at the convent. Though she was conscious of her own innocence, and had been solemnly assured, only a few hours before, by the selectmen of Charlestown, that she and her house were safe, and had nothing to fear; yet her responsibility for the young ladies committed to her care, could not but make her anxious.

The ostensible cause of the excitement was briefly this. A few weeks previous, one of the nuns, Mary St. John, had, in a temporary fit of derangement caused by illness, left the convent, and repaired to one of the neighboring houses, where, it was said, that she complained of being unhappy, and desired to be taken to a family in West Cambridge. Thither she was carried by the persons to whom she had appealed. The very next morning she expressed to her brother her desire to return to the convent; and did return willingly, and declared that she had no recollection of going away, or of any thing which had taken place in relation to it. Yet the circumstance that a nun had gone out from the convent, was the theme of much gossip and many terrible surmises.—Among other rumors, it was confidently stated that Mary St. John was a young nun who had been over-persuaded to make the profession; that she stipulated before she returned to the convent, that she should not be obliged to assume the black veil again but should, in three weeks be dismissed honorably, and allowed to return to her friends. It was further stated that her friends had called for her at the time named, and she was not to be found!

This Monk Lewis story was mostly a fiction. Mary St. John had been a nun for nearly thirteen years—she is exceedingly attached to her profession, and no persuasion could now induce her to leave the sisterhood. She has no recollection of expressing a wish to depart in three weeks; nor was she ever denied to her friends.

But these rumors were abroad, they had reached the Superior, though she did not consider them entitled to any attention, till they appeared in the shape of a newspaper article.

The same day, (Saturday the 9th,) the gentleman to whose house the nun first repaired, came to the convent, stating the excitement abroad, and requested to see Mary St. John.—This the Superior readily granted, and also permitted him to go over the whole house, and examine the cellars, where it was reported the horrid dungeons were situated. He found nothing to justify suspicion; the nun assured him she was at perfect freedom; that she staid from choice; and he promised the Superior to lay before the public, on Monday, a statement which would clear her, and remove or silence all these unfounded, injurious reports.

On the next day, one of the Selectmen of Charlestown came to the convent, requiring to see Mary St. John, and to be allowed to examine

the buildings. The Superior felt loth to have him take this liberty on the Sabbath-day, but she was aware that popular excitement is not apt to be very reasonable, and that should she refuse him, the clamor might be raised, that she was not prepared for his search. So she summoned Mary St. John to attend him, and permitted him to examine every part of the premises. He too, professed himself perfectly satisfied that all was right, but stated that it would be necessary his colleagues should also examine the house. They came on Monday afternoon, three Selectmen accompanied by two other men, saw and conversed with Mary St. John as long as they chose, and were shown throughout every part of the establishment, from the cupola to the cellar. They assured the Superior that they were convinced of her innocence, and of the falsehood of the charges against her house; that they would take immediate measures to clear up the mistake; and that she should not be molested.—Accordingly the household retired to rest in peace.

But this calm was soon broken. About half past nine the Superior heard loud shoutings, and the terrifying cry—"Down with the Convent! Down with the Convent!"

She called to the nuns to rise, and had herself only time to reach the window of an upper front apartment, when twenty or thirty dark forms came rushing up to the dwelling. She demanded what they wanted.

"We want to see the nun who ran away."

The Superior sent instantly for Mary St. John, but the alarm had been too much for her weak nerves—she had fainted.

The Superior then expostulated with the rioters on their savage conduct, in thus assailing a community of females; she pointed out to them the danger they were incurring, and the punishment they would bring on themselves by thus attacking, in the night-time, a peaceful dwelling-house, and she inquired if they had not learned from their Selectmen, the falsehood of the rumors about the nun.

"No," was the reply, and then some one in the crowd added—"Mr. Runey (one of the Selectmen) opened the gate."

The mob, however, retired from the house; they were not then sufficiently wrought up for the onset, and the firmness of the Superior seemed to awe them.

But they soon returned in greater number, and with loud threats and horrid imprecations against the Superior. She was again at the window; and now Mr. Runey appeared among the rioters, and requested her to put herself and household under his protection.

"Have you any authority for our protection from the other Selectmen?"

He said—"No"—but added that he would protect her and the children.

She replied that the children had been committed to her care by their parents, that she could not give them up to him; but that if he had the power to protect them, she begged he would use it to disperse the mob.

"I will do what I can," was his answer; and he probably did exert some influence, for the mob again retired without doing any mischief. This might be somewhat owing to their fears. They inquired of the Superior when she commanded them to depart, if she had armed men in the house? and she, seeing that they were cowardly, did not undeceive them. But a poor frightened lay-sister exclaimed, that they were entirely unprotected.

Whatever reason induced the rioters to retire, the sequel showed that their malicious purpose was not abandoned. A signal fire soon

blazed in front of the convent, and the mob again rushed forward, armed with stones and clubs, and began to demolish and dash in the doors and windows.

Never till this moment, had the Superior believed the rioters would proceed to violence ; but she now saw that she must abandon her dwelling to their fury. Her chief concern was for her pupils, the young girls that, like frightened birds, were flocking around her. We have said one nun was an invalid. Her complaint was consumption, and no hopes were entertained of her recovery, yet she was able to walk about, and occasionally perform some duties as an instructress—that very day she had given lessons in music ; but terrors now rendered her helpless ; and in that state she had to be borne from her room. With great exertions the pupils were all collected, and the Superior saw them out of the house before she would leave it. The ruffians had already made their way in, and rushed first to her apartment, so that she was compelled to abandon all her valuables, plate, jewels, watches, and a large sum in money, which, after her pupils were safe, she had intended to secure.

The trembling exiles thus driven forth in darkness, and not knowing where to flee for shelter, retired first to a green house, at the bottom of the garden ; but the mob, with loud shouts were seeking them ; the Superior tried to escape by a side gate ; this was also guarded by the rioters ; and she finally had to creep through a small opening, made by removing the paling from the garden fence, and with her household, some of the little girls in very thin clothing, make her way through the damp fields, for the distance of half a mile, till they reached the house of Mr. Adams, where they were kindly received, and humanely comforted through the remainder of this dreadful night.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let those who wish to know what the unbridled passions of lawless men can effect, go to Mount Benedict, and look on the desolated grounds, and blackened and crumbling ruins, of that spot lately the abode of youth and beauty, where all around was pleasantness and peace, and they will feel that without *law, liberty* is a word of horrid import ; and that, unless the voice of public opinion is deep-toned and decisive against this outrage, no religious community, no literary institution, in our land is safe.

If private pique, prejudice, rumors, are to guide the popular mind, and direct the popular arm to crush the suspected, without trial or appeal, the reign of Nero would be preferable to that of democracy.

It is strange that *all Christians* do not see the danger of permitting any *one sect* to be persecuted or injured, without endeavoring to do it justice. There is a spirit of infidelity and anarchy abroad in our land, and if it can prevail by violence, to destroy one sect, and do this with impunity, it will soon gather strength for further attacks and bolder measures. The Catholics must be protected, or the Protestants will not long be able to hold their own faith unmolested, nor to worship in the temples their fathers have built and consecrated.

We make these remarks, not that we are inclined to Catholicism, but we would practise that rule which enjoins us to do to others as we would wish to be done by. We certainly should not select a Catholic seminary as the place of education for our own daughters ; yet candor obliges us to say, that, from all we can learn of the system pursued at the Ursuline Convent, we think it offers, when compared with "Young Ladies' Seminaries," in general, its fair proportion of advantages. The fashionable accomplishments, that is, whatever renders woman attract-

ive in society, have always been sedulously attended to in a conventional education. The Nuns teach, by example, the gentle and graceful movement, and the soft low tone of voice, and in these particulars might be advantageously recommended as models to all instructresses.

It should be borne in mind, that there is no standard of female education; we have no model schools, founded by public beneficence, like colleges for our young men, to regulate the system, or rather introduce system into the order of those studies and pursuits which should be requisite to form an accomplished woman. Female education is left entirely to private experiments—to chance, caprice, and the shifting breath of fashion; and it is not to be wondered at if the prevailing style is superficial, showy, and often useless.

There have been some remarks in the public journals, relating to the impropriety of Protestant parents placing their Children at a Catholic seminary, and thus virtually training them in the Catholic faith. Solicitude for the right moral instruction of young females can scarcely be too watchful. It is all important that the heart, soul and mind, of woman, should be imbued with the pure and holy sentiment of her duty to God, and the responsibility which her influence over the character of others imposes. But let us be just to the Catholics. The Superior, in her prospectus, engages to instruct her pupils only in the broad principles of Christian faith and practice, in which all persons who believe the Bible, can unite; and we have good reason to conclude she has adhered, scrupulously, to these conditions. Of all the Protestant young ladies, and there have been several hundred educated at the Ursuline Convent since its foundation, *not a single individual has embraced the Catholic faith.*

**THE URSULINES.**—The institute of these religious ladies, owes its origin to the piety and zeal of the Blessed Angela of Brescia, who, in the year 1537, associated with herself some pious ladies, who were willing to devote themselves to the christian education of some young females. Pope Paul, the third, convinced of the utility of this institute, approved of it in 1544, under the name of the company of St. Ursula. In 1572, Gregory the 13th, at the solicitation of St. Charles Borromeo, erected it into a religious order, and gave them the rule of St. Augustine. Besides the three ordinary vows, the Ursulines take a fourth, to employ themselves, as far as circumstances may permit, in the gratuitous instruction of young persons of their own sex. In 1604, they were introduced into France, and had their first house in that kingdom, at Asia, in Provence. In 1608, Madame L'Auillier founded a house for them in Paris, which became the model-house of those afterwards established. Of the 350 houses of the order which were in France—previous to the revolution—most were devoted to the gratuitous instruction of destitute children.

Nothing is more edifying than the account given by Heliot, in his history of the Religious Orders, of the different branches of this most respectable and useful sisterhood. It spread throughout all the Catholic countries. Some houses of this order are in Ireland, among which the Ursuline Convent of Cork attracts the attention and admiration of all those who visit that city. In common with the other houses of the order in that country, it confers incalculable benefits on the part of the country in which it is placed, and, indeed, on the whole kingdom; for the young ladies from all parts of Ireland, receive their education there.

In this country the order has subsisted for more than a century. In New Orleans, the sisters of the injured ladies in Charlestown, have ren-

dered essential benefits to society. It is not necessary to speak of their heroism and charitable patriotism, evinced during the siege of that city, in 1815. When the British troops had landed, and were approaching the city, the Ursuline Nuns, animated by the instructions of the venerable friend of the beloved Chevereux, Bishop Dubourg, regardless of the danger by which they were threatened, took a distinguished part in the common preparations for resistance. They converted their house into a military Hospital, and bestowed unremitting care on the sufferers, during the whole time that the city was thus critically circumstanced. In the day of triumph, they were not forgotten by a grateful people. Special and honorable mention was made of them, and this sentiment of admiration did not die away with the occasion which gave it birth, but has since been frequently and gratefully remembered.—*Catholic Herald*

MR. HALE.—The subjoined letter was received by me some time since, in answer to one, in which I requested from the writer such information as her long residence in the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown, would enable her to furnish respecting the rules and practices of that community;—particularly as to their treatment of the sick and as to improper restraints on the liberty of the inmates. This request was made in consequence of finding, in the course of my inquiries into the causes of the destruction of the Nunnery, that among the stories in circulation affecting its character, and which had excited the popular fury against it, one charged them with the grossest inhumanity to the sick, in the last stages of life, and particularly to a Mrs. Mary Magdalen, who died in the latter part of 1831—and another imputed to the Superior of the community, the most unjustifiable restraints upon the personal liberty of the inmates; I also thought that Miss Alden (who is personally a stranger to me, but who, as I learn from others, is of the most respectable character and standing in society,) was a person whose former acquaintance with the Convent, and whose present removal from it, would render her testimony peculiarly valuable to those persons who are desirous to know the truth, and who are not too prejudiced to see and acknowledge it.—The letter was enclosed to me by Hiram O. Alden, Esq. Post-master at Belfast, brother of the writer, who is undoubtedly well known to many in this city and vicinity.—He stated that he had perused his sister's letter, and assures me that its representations are such as he has always heard from her, and that he had determined to send his own daughter to the Ursuline Convent for her education as soon as she was of suitable age.—He is a Protestant. I believe Miss Alden's letter will serve to disabuse the community at large, of many errors and prejudices created by the foulest calumnies, and I trust that you and other Editors of papers, who are desirous that truth should prevail, and that justice may be done to the much injured Ursulines, will publish it. I have her authority to make such use of it as I might deem expedient to promote these good ends. Your obd't Servant,

Sept. 25, 1834.

SAM'L P. P. FAY.

BELFAST, Sept. 4th, 1834.

SIR—I have received your letter, and hasten to give you an early answer. The task is not a pleasant one under such circumstances. No delicacy of feeling however, shall withhold me from doing justice, as far as lies in my power, to that estimable and never-to-be-forgotten community.

In the month of December, 1827, I entered the Ursuline Convent, Mt. Benedict, as a candidate for that community. After remaining

about two years, I became convinced that I had no vocation for that state of life. Having become exceedingly attached to the Lady Superior and those of her community, I felt an unwillingness to leave. I found, however, that it was vain to think of compelling myself to remain, and I immediately made known my feelings on the subject, to the Lady Superior. So far from meeting with the least opposition, she replied, that "strongly as she was attached, and dearly as she loved me, she must advise me to go, if I saw that I could not be happy there;" for, she continued, "no one can judge of that so well as yourself, and it shall be left to your own decision," telling me at the same time that "their Rules and Constitution did not allow any one to remain, but such as found their happiness there, and *there only*." She told me that I was at liberty to go, whenever I pleased, and should be provided with every thing requisite for my departure, which was done *two years* after; having remained there that length of time, merely from personal attachment to the Lady Superior, and her no less worthy community. During my residence there, (a period of four years,) I can truly say that I never saw *one* action to censure.

Their character is as *unimpeachable* as their conduct is pure and blameless. I can assure you, that as they appear at the parlor, so are they in their most unguarded moments—no unbending from that sweetness and affability of manner, which characterize them all. Every duty, both temporal and spiritual, is discharged with the greatest fidelity. The love of God, and the hope of Heaven, is the motive for every action. As teachers nothing can exceed the care, attention, and kindness, which is bestowed on *all* placed under their instruction. As persons secluded from the world and devoted to God, their purity of conversation and moral principles, their nobleness of soul, their charity, kindness, and forbearance to each other, cannot fail of being a most edifying example to all around them.

My situation in that community was such as to render me thoroughly acquainted with every member, and every part of the house. And I solemnly assure you, there was not the least thing existing there, that any person could disapprove, were he ever so prejudiced.

As regards the school, I have ever recommended it to every parent, as the only *secure* place for the education of daughters in New England, or even the United States. I say *secure*, for so I consider it, in respect to the allurements held out to the young mind by a fascinating world, in most of our boarding schools.

With respect to Mrs. Mary John, I was at the Convent\* the day after her return there; I saw her in the parlor, she told me she had been very ill. At that time I knew nothing of her unfortunate departure. I found Dr. Thompson there also, who prohibited my seeing the Superior for the space of five days, in consequence of one of her eyes being dangerously affected. At the expiration of that time I passed the day there. I saw Mrs. Mary John, who related to me the particulars of her going—said she could not realize that it was so; expressed the greatest horror at having taken such a step; and said that she would prefer death to leaving. She has been in that community thirteen years, and has had the black veil eleven years. She always appeared perfectly happy, and I have no doubt that she was so, as we have had many conversations on that subject. She has told me repeatedly that she could never cease to be thankful for having been called to that happy state of life.

\* Miss Alden was on a visit to Boston, at the time of the conflagration of the Convent.

If she had changed her mind, she had only to say so, to be *free* as I am at present. Never, I can assure you, has there been, or can there be, according to the Rules and Constitutions of the order, any *improper restraints* imposed on any person entering there. While I was a resident there, several left without the least opposition on the part of the Superior, or any other person.

As it respects the sick, nothing, I assure you, can be farther from the truth, than the assertions of Miss —. For never, by any person, (I will not except my own parents' house,) have I received greater kindness, or more attention in sickness, than during my stay in that house.

With the greatest respect, &c.

CAROLINE FRANCES ALDEN.

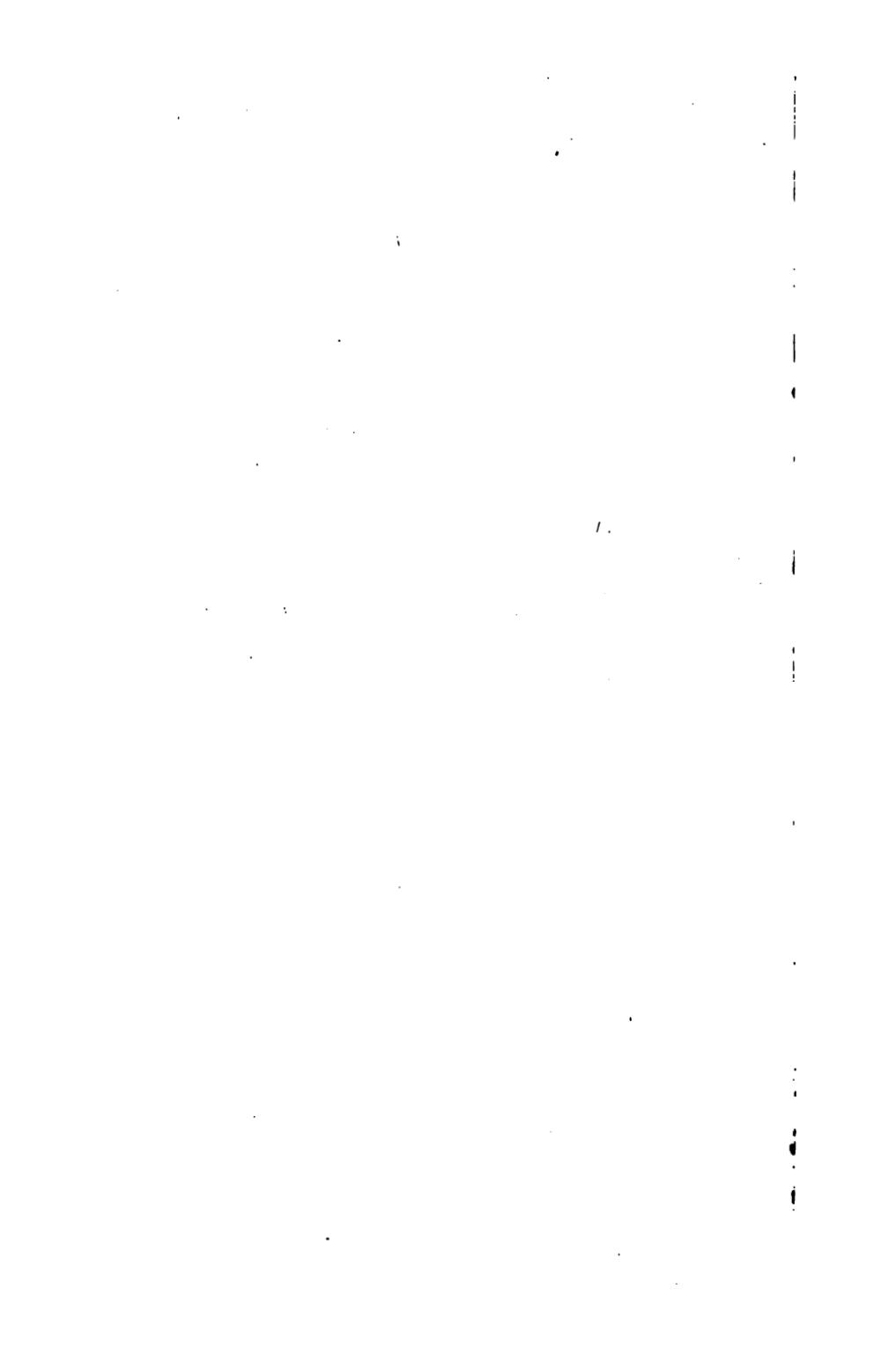
Hon. S. P. P. FAY.

---

#### C O N C L U D I N G   R E M A R K S.

In executing the purpose with which we began, of giving a satisfactory and connected account of the melancholy occurrence at Charlestown, the documents we have thought it expedient to bring together have so far exceeded our original design, as to exclude nearly all our own remarks. We cannot, however, let the occasion pass, without bearing our testimony in favor of Mr. LYMAN, the Mayor of Boston, for the prompt and decisive measures taken by him; and also to the successful efforts of the Catholic Bishop and Clergy, in preventing any further disturbance of the public peace in retaliation of the outrage already committed. If our humble labor shall tend to the diffusion of correct information, to advance the cause of truth, and to inspire with mutual charity all who profess to be believers in the Christian dispensation, one great end of this publication will be accomplished.

Since our work was prepared for the press, the Report of the Boston Investigating Committee has been published, and, although a very able document, there are no material facts in it which cannot be found in the foregoing pages.









1907  
2. G. 36



3 2044 018 699 603

**THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED  
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS  
NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON  
OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED  
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE  
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE  
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.**

**Harvard College Widener Library  
Cambridge, MA 02138 (617) 495-2413**

